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Victoria Street Newz

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news
that
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July 2008

Vol. 5
No. 4



On Organizing Young Workers

By Jasmin Mujanovic

It is evident that working conditions in Canada, and BC especially, are as bad as they’ve been in the past few decades; more deaths, more injuries and fewer protections for workers.

For young workers especially, many new to the world of wage labour, this is particularly problematic. If workers are increasingly hesitant to say “no” to their bosses, for fear of reprisals, the situation is even more dire amongst young workers. They may not have as much to lose (that is, they may not have families of their own to feed-though many help support younger siblings and extended families) but they have spent their lives being told to obey authority; from parents, teachers and now bosses. They may simply not know that it’s okay to say and in some cases, legally protected, to say “no.”

But the bigger issue at play here is that it isn’t just the immediate health and safety of young workers, and workers in general, but rather what the policies of the present, and the realities of today mean for generations tomorrow. The labour and activist community can fight through single issues, and perhaps even win the occasional battle (i.e. Grant’s Law), but the approach is ultimately one destined to fail. Because workers aren’t abused, and don’t die because of singularly bad policies, they die because of a bad system all together - because of capitalism and capitalist practices, we have seen that it is a relatively simple matter for state and capital to roll back and negate one time victories.

A more broad based, shall we say, revolutionary approach is needed - one that provides people with a whole system analysis or at least an environment in which as much is possible in. We must appeal to young workers with new tools, as the tools of the past, while sound in essence, are lacking in delivery. We cannot hand a 16 year old a copy of Das Kapital or the ABCs of Anarchism and expect them to become comrades in the struggle overnight. We have to appeal to them in a “modern” fashion. In short, we need to utilize new media to approach new generations.

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Thanks for your support!!

About Street Newz

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Victoria Street Newz is printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper with vegetable ink, at Horizon Publications - www.horizonpublications.ca, 604-254-8840.

Victoria Street Newz is a proud member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The mission of NASNA is to support a street newspaper movement that creates and upholds journalistic and ethical standards while promoting self-help and empowerment among people living in poverty. INSP is an umbrella organization that provides a consultancy service for its partner papers, advises new street papers, and supports initiatives for marginalized people. Visit NASNA at www.nasna.org or the INSP at www.street-papers.org.

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JUST ANOTHER RANT

by Janine Bandcroft

"The US blockade of Cuba is a double edged sword -- it cuts the human heart of people in Cuba by denying access to basic necessities of almost every area. Secondly, it cuts the heart of people in the US who need products that are uniquely produced in Cuba." **Rev. Lucius Walker, in the film Bloqueo**

I don't know what these unique products are, that Cuba produces ... do you? I know about the cigars, I've heard about the small business owner on Government St. who's being told he's unable to display his tobacco products publically - something about 'protecting' the children. I know it's illegal for Americans to buy Cuban cigars in Canada, and I've heard the story about Governor Arnold sending his driver into a Canadian hotel, as he was on his way to the airport, to do his illegal cigar purchasing for him. But I don't know what these Cuban products are, that I'll help bring back from the unique island nation.

I trust the Reverend, and the Pastors for Peace who I'm working with, that our Cuban purchases will include solar panels, art, and music rather than something nasty like opium -- which, I've heard, is increasingly plentiful since the Afghanistan invasion, of which 'Canada' (and its \$) plays a significant role.

Before this paper is printed I'll be on the road - a Caravanista among others, taking foreign policy into our own hands, trading person to person, defying unjust laws made by power hungry governments. It's really a once in a lifetime opportunity, my fist visit to Cuba (chronicled at cubajourney.blogspot.com), and it's got me thinking about this lifetime spent, an entire lifetime lived, while a small group of people

on a Caribbean island struggle to hold on to a revolution that took from the rich and gave to the poor. Their situation isn't perfect, of course, but they're surviving, and holding up internationally recognized models of health care and community agriculture while our a big tough imperialist neighbour has, since the year I was born, passed increasingly harsh legislation against them.

They say Fidel Castro was a dictator. They say the same about his brother Raul, who was elected by the people to replace him. I'm a woman, a feminist, and I say at least - if that's true - there's just the one. Patriarchy by itself is bad enough, but combined with capitalism has all but devastated this beautiful planet. Hasta la Victoria Siempre!



Talking Dog for Sale

by anonymous

A guy is driving around Victoria and he sees a sign in front of a house: TALKING DOG FOR SALE. He rings the bell and the owner tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes into the backyard and sees a Labrador retriever sitting there.

"You talk?" he asks.

"Yes, I do," the Lab replies.

"So, what's your story?"

The Lab looks up and says:

"Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so I told CSIS about my gift, and in no time, at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one



of their most valuable spies for eight years running. But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security wandering

near suspicious characters and listening in. uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired.

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog. "Ten dollars," the guy says.

"Ten dollars? This dog is amazing. Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?"

"Because he's a liar!!! He's never done any of that stuff!!!"

OPINION To Squat or Not to Squat? That is the Question

by Betty Krawczyk
Mayoral Candidate, City of Vancouver
bettysearlyedition.blogspot.com

Squat. The very word has a harsh ugly sound. Almost like spit. Or that other S word. From Wikipedia the word squatting in a political sense means "the act of occupying an abandoned or unoccupied space or building that the squatter does not own, rent or otherwise have permission to use." Okay, that's straightforward enough.

There was a rally at Little Mountain low rental complex. Five hundred people are losing their homes there. Private developers are moving in, moving on up, sucking in public land, public assets, fattening further on the flesh and souls and futures of poor people. Earlier I was on one of the Stands for Housing that took place all over the city today demanding that housing be recognized as a human right. Why? Because it's inhuman to leave whole categories of people homeless in a province awash in wealth.

People sicken and die from homelessness. Working families sicken and fall apart when there's not enough money for food, clothes, transportation and school supplies after sky high rents are paid. Everybody sickens when they live in a city where a provincial government, crazed and stupid from an absolute privatization ideology, gives a housing allowance of 375 dollars a month per adult on public assistance. Where is anybody in this city going to find a place to stay for 375 a month except bunking in with a stranger in one of the flea bag hotels which in turn are rapidly being emptied out for development?



Where, I want to know is the mayor and council on this? Why aren't they jumping up and down at such miserable treatment of citizens? Why aren't they screaming in the streets? Where are their guts?

Apparently they don't have any. Or else they have shriveled by the dazzle of developer's money, by the shock and awe of corporate might.

In the face of this crisis let's at least look at the possibility of

drafting some sort of squatters rights. Don't faint on me now. Stay with me. To prevent revolutions some countries, even western ones, have drafted squatter's rights, squatter's laws. In the Netherlands if a house is empty a year or more then squatters have a legal right to move in. There are similar rulings, laws and by laws in other countries.

Growing poverty is dogging us like a plague. Over priced housing and homelessness are festering sores. While, of course, and at the same time, development runs amuck. But the solution is relatively simple. Run the developers and their politicians out of City Hall, out of the legislature, out of parliament. It's almost as though most of the rest of us are being held in a kind

of Stockholm Syndrome where we have been persuaded by the highjackers and kidnappers that their interests are also ours. In our finer moments we know this is not true. Let's collectively find our own guts, our spleens, our good hearts, and strong minds.

And we can do this.

Organizing Young Workers ... continued from cover

Accessible, exciting and engaging new media can re-launch the radical tradition as a viable alternative, a viable politic for the present. It is clear that people are yearning for change; between the right wing criminalities of the Liberals, the soft social democratic rhetoric of the New Democrats, real change is needed. But real change begins with recruitment of “new blood” to the greater struggle. And to interest and excite the next generation, we must be in tune with their interests.

We may scoff at the fact that advertisers do not sell products, but rather lifestyles, we may lament and criticize the underhandedness and sinister nature of such tactics. But all the same, we must acknowledge that these tactics work. We know that Nike and Budweiser are substance-less in their promotion - yet millions flock to their products. All the same, we understand that we are hardly wanting for substance, for body and soul, but millions have departed the ranks of the militant working class. Therefore, let us appropriate (in order to in future expropriate!) their tactics, subvert their medium, and launch a new generation on their way to class struggle.

The old IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] understood this; it wasn't merely through militancy and blood on the streets that our membership swelled to over 200,000 at one point. It was through music, art and humor. The modern IWW and broader activist community need to reclaim this tradition. Thought Crime Ink (www.thoughtcrimeink.com) is a worker operated apparel distributor affiliated with the Edmonton branch of the IWW. Through some of the most “rad” shirts you're bound to ever see, our comrades spread the good word. Blazing crimson tees invite us to support the “General Strike,” a silhouette of a cash register explains to us that “This is Class Warfare,” and a beautiful cheery tree blossoms from the roots of a stylized circle A. You want to wear these shirts, and as a result, you want to believe and fight for the ideals they espouse.

In short, friends, make your projects appealing in every way possible. It may seem trivial, sophomoric or shallow but understand that the year is no longer 1905. If we are serious about change, if we are serious about all that which we discuss privately then it is time to “grow the brand.” It is time to package our desires for a new society in a new shell, so that we may do away with the old in whole.

Jasmin Mujanovic is a young organizer with the Industrial Workers of the World in Vancouver. He can be reached at jmujanov@sfu.ca.

Thanks to radicalgraphics.org for the cover image.



Shawn Brant's Arrest by Sue Collis, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory

(May 4th, 2008) On Friday, April 25th, 2008, my husband, Shawn Brant, was arrested and detained on assault and weapons charges. Since that time, Commissioner Julian Fantino and the Ontario Provincial Police have issued public statements that have, it seems, misstated the events leading to my husband's arrest.

I believe it is important to the public good for people to understand the circumstances that have led to Shawn's incarceration at this time. Those circumstances are as follows:

On Sunday, April 20th, 2008, the community of Tyendinaga responded to threats from a Kingston developer to bring “a crew of 25 to 30 guys,” in order to begin development on a property which falls within the Culbertson Tract land claim. Mohawks from Tyendinaga did peaceful road closures on Highway 2, adjacent to this proposed development site on Mohawk land.

My husband Shawn has been living and complied with very strict conditions imposed when he was charged in relation to community rail and highway blockades on the June 2007 Aboriginal Day of Action. One of his conditions is not to attend protests. During the evening of Monday, April 21st, 2008, my husband was some distance away from the road closures erected in response to the Kingston developer, talking to a Tyendinaga community member, while he also checked a nearby creek for fish.

During this conversation, Shawn became aware of some commotion down the road, and made his way towards the commotion, parking his car some 50 feet away from where a small group of people was gathered on one side of the road. The first thing Shawn saw a 10-year-old girl shaking and crying uncontrollably. He had no idea what was going on. As he approached the scene, someone yelled “Shawn help us!” The little girl screamed, “They hurt my Mommy! They're gonna hurt my Mommy.” Someone else yelled, “He has a ball bat!” At this time, Shawn noticed two trucks were parked facing the people who were in obvious distress.

Shawn returned to his car and retrieved his fishing spear. By the time Shawn returned to where the people were gathered, the occupants of the trucks were back inside their vehicles. Shawn shouted at the occupants of the trucks to leave. The windows were so tinted that he could not make out their faces. The drivers of the trucks sped away with such force that one of their truck tires was raised in the air, spraying much gravel and stone at the women and the child, some of which they later discovered was imbedded in their skin.

Shawn turned his head to avoid catching stones in the face, and held out his spear in an effort to create some distance between the group of Mohawks and the trucks, out of concern that those in the vehicles would strike those on the road with their vehicles. The trucks then sped away. That is the extent of Shawn's interaction with the individuals he is now charged with assaulting. To be clear, he is charged with assaulting the men in the trucks.

A 911 call was made during this incident on April 21st, 2008, in which the trucks' licence plates were recorded. Shortly thereafter, the women made statements to the police, identifying the men driving the trucks. The

women also testified in police statements that one of the men swung a club at them, drove one of the trucks into them, and threatened further violence. The women also described being injured by flying stones, and described the trauma endured by the young girl. No one but Shawn has been charged.



The [identified] men from Deseronto [appear to have] sought out this group of people, deliberately caused them injury and issued threats of further violence. They [appear to have been] targeted for assault and abuse for no other reason than that they are Native. The actions taken by the men from Deseronto [appear to have been] driven by bigotry and racial hatred. [If these were the motives],

by definition, these were hate crimes. Again, no one but Shawn has been charged.

The men are presumed to have filed a complaint against my husband, resulting in a police search of his car on Friday, April 25th, when his fishing spear was taken from his car, and charges of assault and possession of a weapon – the spear – were laid. My husband remains in prison, in maximum security, as a result.

It is our understanding that the prosecution is seeking yet another publication ban on all future court proceedings in this matter. A pattern has emerged with respect to my husband, Shawn Brant. The police and prosecution make sensational and vilifying statements about Shawn in the media, and then seek a publication ban during court proceedings, when the actual evidence is introduced. The starkly different narrative of events that emerges in court

is withheld and the public forbidden from hearing it. The version of events I have just presented will all but disappear.

Less than a month ago, my husband was acquitted of charges he carried for more than 18 months. When issuing the ruling in this acquittal, the judge described the investigative practice and evidence employed and presented by the cops and the Crown as “problematic” and “troubling,” as they related to Shawn. During this same period, CBC Radio aired a documentary in which several Mohawk people recounted conversations with OPP

Commissioner Fantino that occurred during the 2007 Aboriginal Day of Action, in which they say he threatened to “ruin” Shawn. During Shawn's detention at the Napanee OPP detachment last week, several different police officers threatened to “slit his throat” and “cut off his head.”

As I deal with the tears of young children who have been robbed of their father once again, Commissioner Fantino claims the OPP is an apolitical and professional organization, dedicated to upholding the rule of law. The events of the past week indicate it is anything but.

For more information and to find out what you can do: www.ocap.ca/supporttmt.html or support.tmt@gmail.com

Photo above: from ocap.ca -- Shawn Brant is depicted in part of a mural located in the College and Ossington area in downtown Toronto.

Photo below: a Mohawk supporter at a rally in Vancouver, a couple of years ago.

A Story of Addiction
 by Tym Sea

This is a story about addiction, and how it has ruined my life.

I have been using cocaine for a better part of 15years. Today I’m writing about it because I feel that perhaps I will some how feel better about admitting it to strangers, but are you really a stranger? I’ve seen you on the street walking by, maybe you saw me from a distance or heard me play my guitar in an alley or on the street busking for change.

I quit using today, so this is one of many. I have quit before using the term day one. How sad it seems to say it again that through the last year I have quit at least a dozen times, because I was so angry at the fact that my addiction is so powerful that I have no sense of responsibility no recollection or care about how much I use or how much I spend \$\$ or where I do it (the Drugs). I feel justified that I should get high.

The streets are full of drugs right here in your back yard, yes your back yard. What the hell are we going to do about it. Meth, crack, heroine, acid, ecstasy. These are destroying our people and making it really hard to survive in an already screwed up world. I honestly don’t think any one cares.. until their kids get hooked and someone stands up and says hey hey what are you, hear that what are you going to do about it. It’s really easy to find drugs to blow your mind and lose all sense of reality. But most people don’t see the dealers and the addicts, instead they see losers and bums street people. Key word is People, and as they prey on other people innocence kids ignorance’s capitalised. Get it.

A little about me cause I’m sure you’re dying to know and I personally I’m dying to tell you. Actually I’m just dying of a f’ing crack addiction and everytime I wake up I wonder if I should just check out! It all started with my friend at 20 years old, remember those days. I went through a run of about 5 or 6 years. I quit for a long time about 10 years. And a friend, that’s right a friend wanted me to hang out with him. The real reason is that misery loves company, because I told him I don’t do that shit. My super hero cape was at home that day and what turned out to be one line turned out to be 5 years of getting high and increasing from lines to hard rock cocaine. I have moved three times since last year and I haven’t had a home to call mine since my divorce in 2002. So basically I had been working my ass off to try and get it together since then.

This is how I have ended up from a 45K year to broke and absolutely confused about what the hell is going on. I know there are others out there that can relate to what I’m talking about. I say we publicly humiliate every f’ing dealer that has been destroying lives all around the world and tell the people we have had it with this suppression, by this statement I mean simply. In Canada we can’t make these drugs i.e. Heroin, cocaine. They come from the next continent..Do you really think our government (the one that’s elected by the people for the people) doesn’t know how to stop it. Do you really think we should turn our heads or stand up and say we’ve had enough. My opinion is my own and I believe everyone is entitled to it.

So as I walk talk live and breath I am constantly cascaded with homelessness, Canadian people on the northern section or the wait for it .. North American continent. Do really think we’re the only ones struggling?

Yet there are those whom I know are in it (homeless) for one reason and one reason only to get high and screw everyone else, and then when shit hits the fan and the don’t have anything to eat it’s back to the food line. “I’m so hard done by”... Well F you! Instead of taking and taking why don’t you try and be a positive part of society rather than indigent user. Someone that just sucks all the resources that need to be used for people with real problems, i.e Fetal alcohol syndrome, schizophrenia, etc...

Well it looks like my time is done, that’s all I have to say for now. So, to all those whom are in a similar situation and “addicted to crack,” I’m really sorry for you, and I wish you luck in your journey to sobriety, because the only way as I understand it, is to be completely abstinent from all mind altering drugs which yes, do include alcohol.

So I guess I’ll smoke another cigarette.

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND
 (AVI)
 MOBILE NEEDLE EXCHANGE

Foot Outreach in the downtown area:
 Monday to Saturday - 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm

The Mobile Van will be driving around:
 Monday to Saturday - 6:30pm to 10:30 pm
 Sundays - 5 pm to 9 pm

Call to find out where they are : 896-AVIX

Route: Herald to Gov’t, down Gov’t, left on Bay, right onto Rock Bay, left on Gorge, right on Garbally to Douglas and then back to Herald via Douglas. It will also stop on Princess near Government.

Call to find out where to get rigs and how to find the van: 3:30-10 pm

250-896-AVIX(2849)



I am writing to invite your group to help our coalition establish a chapter in your city.

What are we?

We are the National Coalition Against Poverty, we were formerly known as the Albertans Against Poverty Organization which was originally founded in 2003 in Edmonton.

Who are our members?

People who are or were formerly on social assistance, pension etc and low income workers.

We have members across Canada in different city such as Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal & Ottawa.

If you or anyone you may know would be interested in becoming our representative in your city you are welcome to contact me at ncap01@gmail.com

We would like to request you to help out our representative in anyway you can with our coalition in Victoria.

In solidarity,
 Daniel Dufresne
 National Coalition Against Poverty Founder

“Poverty & homelessness can be & must be eradicated in Canada”

Eliminate the Growing Wealth Gap
 by Gerry Masuda



There are two major threats facing humanity. One is global warming and the other is the growing global wealth gap between the richest 1% and the increasing number of the destitute.

Global warming is receiving increasing attention from the world. But the growing wealth gap is not.

The public is now becoming aware of the impact of global warming. The public is not as aware of the growing social instability caused by the wealth gap.

However those in power are aware and are taking action. The action is not to reduce the growing gap but to develop laws with the capability to suppress and control dissent.

The Canadian equivalent of the US Patriot Acts, the recent Military Civil Assistance Plan which allowing US troops to enter Canada to assist Canadian authorities, are examples of the growing capability to suppress dissent.

Rather than suppress dissent, a sounder approach would be to slow, stop and then start decreasing the wealth gap.

I suggest a few points for consideration. Immediately stop all tax cuts to rich individuals and corporations.

Review the income tax burden. All those who can should share fairly in the funding of government responsibilities, services and programs.

The progressive income taxes should once again be imposed and the lower levels of tax payers removed from the tax rolls.

What do you think? gmasuda@telus.net.

HOMELAND FOOD SECURITY
 DISASTER ALERT

Whereas, the economic systems intended to provide security of person in this country are collapsing with those of other fossil fuel dependant nations, thereby creating barriers to food accessibility for many people in Victoria,

Homeland Food Security declares a state of emergency.

Henceforth, all pre-consumer food waste will be re-distributed free of charge to those in need.

Supermarkets and other food retailers are instructed to no longer place unsalable food into dumpsters, but to allow volunteer food security workers to collect the food for redistribution.

All citizens are encouraged to volunteer for Homeland Food Security by approaching supermarkets, requesting food, and distributing it to those they determine to be in need.

This is an urgent state of emergency, and if retailers cannot be convinced of this, volunteers are instructed to liberate food from the dumpsters behind the supermarkets.

Countless tonnes of safe, nutritious food are being sent to landfill every day, while thousands of Victorians lack access to a proper diet. This food would be more than sufficient to deal with the growing food crisis that is occurring in our city.

Food is a basic human right, yet our current economic infrastructure has proven ineffective at ensuring the protection of these rights. Thus, this state of emergency shall remain in effect until such time everyone in this city has stable access to a proper nutritional diet.

In the meantime, all citizens of Victoria are requested to assist in the distribution of food in whatever way possible, and

NO MORE EDIBLE FOOD
 SHALL BE THROWN AWAY!!!

Food Security Activists Declare Victory



by Chris Johnson

Food security activists in Victoria declared victory today [May 26th] in a 2 1/2 year old dumpster diving court case.

Charges against four people who were arrested in January of 2006 were stayed after one of the Crown’s witnesses failed to appear.

Dozens of supporters gathered on the courthouse lawn with Food Not Bombs and Homeland Food Security (groups that re-distribute recovered food) to have a picnic and give away food.

Local television media attended and filmed the excessive amount of food that one day’s dumpster diving had yielded.

Homeland Food Security spokesperson Chris Johnson explained to the media present that the dramatic increase in the cost of living has created a hunger disaster.

“It’s not just homeless people who need access to free food,” Johnson explained. “People from all walks of life are finding themselves effected by hunger and malnutrition. Our group has formed as a response to this disaster.”

Victoria Police briefly attended the picnic and inquired as to whether the event might escalate into a tent city. The police were thanked for their suggestion and informed that the picnic would end when the court proceedings were over.

Inside the courthouse, proceedings that were slated to start at 9:30 am were adjourned until 2 pm while bench warrants were issued for the two security guards who were on duty at the supermarket at the time of the arrests. Charges were stayed shortly after 2 pm when only one of the security guards had been located.

The arrests made headlines when they happened because they were caught on video by one of the defendants. Of the four defendants, two were arrested at the dumpster, while the other two were arrested across the street, where they had been filming the action.



While the mainstream media chose to focus on the case as violation of freedom of the press, anti-poverty activists have found it to be yet another disturbing example of police repression of the poor.

Attention is now being turned to the tent city charter challenge that begins June 16th. This is the long awaited court date that will challenge the City of Victoria’s anti-camping by-law.

Photo: Andrew Ainsley, filmmaker and defendant. For more information check ‘The Right to Eat’ at www.loveandfearlessness.com.



Change ... Not The Spare Kind

by cyann ray

Change. They say it’s inevitable, like death and taxes.

There are no socio-economic advantages that can spare one the experience of change. Rich, poor, middle-class, homeless, healthy, disabled or unwell, everyone faces change. The only variances are what those changes are and how we adapt to them.

I remember telling my daughter on her 18th birthday that one of the best abilities to have is the ability to adapt to change. Darwin would surely have agreed. So too would all those species who’ve survived our everchanging world. As our social and/or physical world changes, so must we.

Personally, I’m not a big fan of change. I like the stability of a routine and the freedom of certainty. No surprises. No upheavals. Nothing to figure out, re-arrange, or adjust to. Maybe I’m just getting old (er!) or I’m just old school, either way I’ll never give up my landline for a cell phone or my walkman for an ipod.

Still, I’m not so blind that I fail to recognize this as flawed thinking. Recently I’ve had to adjust to two significant changes in my routine, almost simultaneously. Needless to say I have been a little overwhelmed. (I’ve missed submitting articles for Street Newz for the last two issues!). And I recall the sage advice I once shared with my daughter.

Adapt. Figure out how and why these changes effect me and integrate whatever new behaviour is required for a successful transition. Survive. Like Darwin’s little critters growing legs to leave the sea or wings to fly above it all, change, it would seem, is a natural and necessary part of growth. What would our lives be like without it?

Let’s forget about the comfort of familiarity or the ease of a routine. Without change there is no movement, no momentum. There is simply stagnation. And really, who wants that? It sounds boring and ineffective.

So I rattle my head around and decide to move along or go, as they say, with the flow. View it as growth, I tell myself, and necessary for survival. After all, things could be worse. Those troubled souls on the streets burdened with poverty, despair and addictions face struggles many just read about. I am humbled by their ability to carry on and feel a might small for resenting what I have to face: essentially just an aging Dad and dog. (It’s the details that are weighing me down).

And what about the privileged crowd, how do they fare? If money was of no concern, my Dad wouldn’t have to move but his memory and health would still be failing. And if I had nine grand for the vet, perhaps my dog would get “better,” but money won’t make him younger or give us back those active years on the beach. Richer folks must deal with change too and it would be unfair to assume it’s not as overwhelming for them. Perhaps the resources available to them can ease the experience somehow. A broader support group or a greater ability to recreate likely provides an advantage over the poor, but we all face the uncertainty that change can bring.

From sweating away in a detox unit fearing the unknown life beyond the streets to letting go of a child wanting to travel the world, survival means adjusting to whatever happens in our path. Those folks willing to commit to something new and different with an open mind fare much better than those who don’t.

I am still no fan of change, but I accept its inevitability and plan to survive this current challenge.

The Advocate: Demythologizing Poverty

By W. Robert Arnold



There was a popular song many years ago in which a man was cut off welfare and one of the questions he asked in all of this shock and awe was, “Who will make the payments on my Cadillac.” This is one of the most obvious clues that a myth exists that people on welfare are living well. This, of course, is patently false.

A single employable person on welfare receives \$610 per month. The lowest rate I have found for a bachelor apartment in Victoria is \$680 per month. One bedroom apartments are at the least \$70 more. It is almost impossible to find a room with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities in Victoria right now. The only one I have heard of recently rents for \$425 a month.

The shelter portion of the welfare check is \$375 and is meant to cover not only rent but electricity and telephone as well. It is immediately obvious that \$375 will not even cover rent, let alone utilities.

The support portion of the check is supposed to cover food, clothing, toothpaste and other necessary toiletries, transportation and, laughably, entertainment. The support portion is \$235. A single young person needs \$226.98 a month for food according to the Dietitians of Canada report on the Cost of Eating in BC in 2007.

It is now obvious that welfare doesn’t pay enough to provide a roof over one’s head and a healthy diet.

A single parent with one child receives \$877.22. Fortunately, there are some other programs that give them a little more money but the situation is still one of daily desperation and lack of proper nutrition.

A family of four receives \$1101.06 per month from welfare. A two bedroom apartment costs between \$836 and \$890 per month. This is the apartment they will need if the children can share a bedroom. This leaves less than three hundred dollars for food and I have not factored in utility costs. Child tax benefit might help a little; but not nearly enough to provide properly for the healthy lifestyle these children deserve.

If the two children in this family are around ten years old they will require a combined amount of around \$330 per month for food. The parents will need \$376 per month for a healthy diet. It would seem impossible for this family to survive on welfare, which all too often leads families to break up and parents to give up their children to foster care so they will at least eat properly.

So once again it would seem that the myth is wrong. People living on income assistance are not “living high off the hog”; but are surviving from day to day and doing without the truly necessary things that support physical and mental health.

When asked to raise those rates the government reply is that it cannot afford to in spite of the fact of millions of dollars of surplus it has and the millions of dollars they have distributed to their rich friends and their corporations. Furthermore, they say that if they raised their rates substantially people from all over Canada would come here for the better welfare. People are more attached to their communities and to their families than the government assumes. Any people that did come here for the better welfare rates would at least be better consumers and add to the demand for goods and services. This, after all, is what the businesses want. I often wonder why the rates are not raised to the poverty line; because I think it would help economy immensely.

This government continues to deny people who actually qualify for government assistance enough money on which to survive. We have seen the effects of this policy in our streets. It is not the fault of the poor. It is the fault of this government.

I call this Economic Terrorism. It is a policy of terrorism pursued by the provincial government. Welfare rates this low constitute an act of violence against poor people, which destroys their lives, their families, and their physical and mental health. Furthermore, it condemns them all too often to living on the streets and a hand to mouth existence that leads them into criminal activity, drug addiction and mental illness.

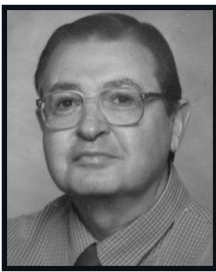
Shame! Shame!
Shame on the government for allowing this condition to exist!
Shame on us for allowing this government to exist!

Robert is a 65 year old man who has fought poverty, his own and others, for over 45 years. He is President of the National Anti Poverty Organization, where he helps the voices of poor people be heard in the halls of power.



Yesterday's "Newsie" and Today's "Newzie"

By Gordon Pollard



When people see our friend John selling copies of "Victoria Street Newz" near the corner of Fort and Douglas, I wonder how many of them realize he is carrying on a great tradition by following in the footsteps of one of the most colourful characters in Victoria's history: the legendary "newsie" Chad Smith.



A lovable combination of leprechaun and curmudgeon, Chad always wore his trademark battered old fedora in fall and winter and a slightly-askew straw hat in spring and summer. He was known by almost everyone in town and was a fixture at the corner of Fort and Douglas, selling copies of the "Daily Colonist" and "Daily Times" from around the end of the Second World War until the early 1970s. Though Chad passed away many years ago, I still remember him fondly as part of the cast of wonderfully eccentric characters who helped make growing up in Victoria in the 1950s and 1960s a lot more fun than it would have been otherwise.

I had many memorable encounters with Chad in the late 50s and early 60s. While a student at Vic High and later UVic, I spent many weekend and summer afternoons helping (or more likely hindering) my dad, who was manager of the old Cunningham Drug Store on the southwest corner of Fort and Douglas and one of Chad's longtime friends.

As soon as copies of the "Times" arrived at Fort and Douglas each afternoon, it was a regular ritual that the ever-ebullient Chad came bursting through the door of the drug store brandishing copies of the paper.

Invariably, my dad would shout from the dispensary: "Hi, Chad! What's the big story today?" And Chad would boom out two or three headlines in his distinctive stentorian tones.

This would often trigger good-natured but lively and free-wheeling arguments in the store, as Chad and customers vigorously debated some of the pros and cons about "Wacky" Bennett, "Flying Phil" Gaglardi and other controversial figures of that era.

After one particularly animated debate, I remember asking my dad, very naively, if he wasn't afraid that having such lively and sometimes heated arguments in the store might be bad for business.

He just laughed and said everyone had great affection for Chad and enjoyed arguing with him. "In his way," my dad said, "Chad plays an important role in this community."

Looking back now at those days long ago, I can see how right my dad was. Chad was, indeed, an important part of life in downtown Victoria in those years – just as John and all the other "Victoria Street Newz" vendors are an important part of life in downtown Victoria today.



Gordon Pollard, who conducts opinion polls for "Victoria Street Newz" during federal and provincial elections, is a native of Victoria and has a BA from the University of Victoria and a MA from Columbia University in New York City. After working for 10 years as a journalist in BC, Alberta, and Ontario, Gordon spent 20 years teaching English and History in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and Sri Lanka.

Photo above: Gordon would like to thank the Times Colonist and Librarian Deirdre Castle for helping find it. The heading above the original photo read: *He Makes 'Street Friends.'* The caption below read: *Chad Smith is part of Victoria. Here he has a smile for customers Rosemary Medland and Father Richard Colwell. – William A. Boucher photo*

Photo below: Vendor and Distribution Co-ordinator John Chomyn has been hawking the Street Newz from his 'office' outside the Bay Centre for several years. He, and the others who comprise the distribution team, are an integral part of the newspaper's success and they form a small part of a much larger international street newspaper movement that has hundreds of years of history. For more information check nasna.org or street-papers.org.

A Letter to the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

by Anonymous

I am writing to you anonymously because I am scared stiff of the Ministry and government you work for. You and your government hold the power of life and death over me.

I received a letter from you dated December 4, 2007 on letterhead telling me that British Columbia is "The Best Place on Earth." I didn't know that. I thought Sweden was. I highly suggest you do an internet search on how Sweden cares for her people.

I have been instructed in that letter, of "new guidelines" to "reduce any confusion over what to report" in earnings. Does the Ministry you work for give due consideration to the increase in the cost of living for those to whom you purportedly "provide the best system of support in Canada?"

Why are not your "clients" asked to provide your Ministry with increases in rent, increases in cost of heating fuels, escalating cost of propane, increased cost of firewood, increased cost in groceries, increased cost in basic telephone service and the increased costs for hydro? Would the increases experienced not better inform your Ministry of the true realities of existence for the disabled poor in British Columbia, "The Best Place on Earth?"

How can your Ministry say in all honesty and truthfulness that the "BC Government's great goal of providing the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities" is functional or even real if these increases are not factored in?



Your Ministry wants to know how much extra money the disabled may make (somehow?) so the government can accuse them of fraud and then take it away from them. People live in fear of you and your government. Does knowledge of this fear give you a feeling of superiority, a feeling of power?

Your Ministry takes extra money away from 60 year olds forcing them to take their Canada Pension early through deducting their Canada Pension Plan as soon as they turn 60. One person I know of receives \$34 per month from Canada Pension and your government takes that away. Then you tell people your government is, "providing the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities"? What other provinces do worse? How petty and mean-spirited can your government get when it deducts \$34 from the monthly provincial cheque? Administrative costs alone eat that up. Does your government need that \$34 more than that person who may be going hungry or doing without winter clothing or can't get to a doctor?

Your government should permit people to keep their Canada Pension in addition to their regular monthly provincial cheque, not deduct it. This would help offset increased cost of living with no skin off the government's nose.

I also highly suggest your government start factoring in increased cost of living and don't tell me about that \$70 increase and pat yourselves on the back. Not only has that been swallowed up a long, long time ago, it was far from sufficient to begin with.

photo: Rose Henry attempts to speak with Gordon Campbell at the ACT BC launch last summer, which coincided with the Committee to End Homelessness' 29% picnic - so called because of the 29% raise the BC Liberals gave themselves.

Notice of the First General Meeting of the Victoria Community Health Co-operative

July 5th
10 am to 1:30 pm
at Fairfield United Church
1303 Fairfield at Moss St.
Victoria BC
(please use Moss St. door)

Registration and refreshments at 10 am.
Lunch will be provided.

ALL ARE WELCOME !!!

**The VCHC welcomes new co-op members,
but anyone interested in finding out about us
is most welcome to attend.**

The Canadian Broadcast Corporation: Canada's War Pimp

by C. L. Cook

June 3rd, 2008, the House of Commons did something we haven't seen since the heady wayback days when Trudeaumania gripped the nation.



Taking their collective, if figurative, cojones in hand, Liberal and Bloc Quebecois members joined the New Democratic Party to endorse its motion to immediately stay deportation proceedings against U.S. military war resisters seeking refuge from American justice here in Canada, and offer those already here, and their families the opportunity to stay, live, and work in Canada as first steps to naturalization.

Predictably, the Conservative minority government voted in lock-step with their leader, Stephen Harper in opposition, but for the first time since Harper's party took power in 2006 a piece of House business the government did not support was ratified: The NDP motion was endorsed in a 137-110 vote.

This is huge news for the millions of anti-war activists in the United States and the world, but you would not know it watching the Canadian Broadcast Corporation news flagship, The National. Though the June 3rd program found more than twenty of its allotted 44 minute broadcast window to devote to Barack Obama's then yet to be ratified "victory" in the Democratic Party's primary race for America's scheduled presidential election, not one second was granted to a story that could have an earth-shaking effect on Canada's relationship with the United States, and would prove literally a matter of life or death for thousands of refugee soldiers in hiding in Canada and the U. S. It could too, should the Conservatives honour the will of the House, also mean the beginning of the end to the immoral and illegal wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation chose silence.

Joining the CBC's dead air on this issue is Canada's biggest private communications company, CanWest Global. Perusing the following day's (June 4, 2008) edition of Victoria's only daily, the Times-Colonist, not one mention of Harper's first defeat in the House, or the ramifications of this historic vote is to be found: Blank.

It was, as Harold Pinder might say, something that; "...never happened; even as it was happening, it never happened."

The CBC's acquiescence to the promoters of perpetual warfare is not new; the management and its correspondents willingly suspended disbelief when George Bush the Elder told tall tales of American womanhood being violated by thugs in Panama City, thus justifying the destruction of thousands of lives to bring to heel the "despot" Noriega. Likewise, the CBC cheered along when George Bush recycled WWI era stories of babes

butchered in hospitals by Saddam's sadistic storm troopers in Kuwait, thus justifying the destructions of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives; and just so, they willingly embedded within the Clinton administration's hide, marching along with it to war against the next newest Hitler, Slobodan Milosevic of the Former Yugoslav Republic. There, again, uncounted lives ruined and a country laid waste.

That Canwest would seek to banish the only hopeful news to emerge Ottawa, in the form of yesterday's triumph for peace, is par for the course for that pathetic excuse for truthful

journalism, (we need only remember the sentiment of the late patriarch of the Asper-controlled media behemoth, Israel "Izzy" Asper, who vowed nary a discouraging word would be heard, nor printed by Canada's predominant media operator concerning his namesake nation's beastly behaviour) but, I don't have to pay to read, see, and hear Canwest's lies; the same is not true for the CBC, for which a portion of my taxes, extracted on pain of imprisonment, supports.

Following WWII, both Lord Haw Haw and Tokyo Rose, well known to British and American troops, were hung by the conquering Allied armies. They were deemed war criminals, whose studio night jobs propagandising for Hitler and Hirohito were rewarded at the end of a rope. Sentenced to death not only for the lies they told, but for the truths they refused to reveal, theirs is a fate perhaps undeserved, but the board and camera talent of the CBC might do well to remember: It was sad Haw Haw's and Madame Rose's enabling role being tried following the horror of their day, and they were found complicit.

That these wars and occupations are immoral is truth. That this crime, (the "mother" of all crimes, another stretch-necked war criminal from the recent past might have said) this abomination against humanity is a conspiring of ruthless corporate and political interests literally making a killing killing is truth. That these truths are not acknowledged as such by Canada's media is truth.

While the Corp. won't allow talk of peace to interrupt its war tattoo, they do carry two tales that may make of this "conscientious" stuff a story yet. While failing to report on resistance to the wars, on the same day the House stood up to Harper, the The National did cover the return of the body of Captain Richard Stephen Leary, the 84th Canadian killed outright in Afghanistan, while their website covered another Canadian preparing for his third tour in Afghanistan.

It begs the question: If "Canada's New Government," as it insists it be described, refuses to grant haven for those Americans with moral qualms about killing innocent men, women, and children half a world away, and the CBC refused to report on resistance to this nation's growing anti-militarist movement, where will Canada's first soldiers of conscience go in their turn?

Chris Cook offers alternative views via Gorilla Radio, Mondays on CFUV radio (cfuv.uvic.ca), and online at pacificfreepress.com.



Capitalism is NOT Democracy

by C'daoim

In the late 19th century and the early 20th century there was a lot of unrest by the people of Canada for a more fair and just society. Capitalism was showing itself to be a corrupt and repressive ideology that did not consider the well being of the citizens. The idea that the natural resources of the country were the personal property of individuals was being enforced with government aid.

In British Columbia, for example, James Dunsmuir owned coalmines on Vancouver Island and he had the reputation of a notorious union-breaker. When workers wanted to go on strike "...he was sufficiently influential [enough] to have the provincial government call out the militia..." (Pg 6-7 McCormack) James Dunsmuir would eventually become Premier of British Columbia from 1900 to 1902.

Representative democracy was still 60 years away from becoming the system of governance. The exploitation of citizens was the norm, so much so that women and children found them selves working in sweatshops. Eventually the people had enough and started to demand and search for ways to have a voice in the way the country was developing. It was not that citizens did not want to work but rather they wanted fair wages and 8-hour days in order to attain the necessities of life.

Then, some educated people who had sympathy for the average citizen started trying to form unions and political parties that would be far more considerate to the needs of the people. This brought a tremendous fear into the leaders of the country and their corporate friends. They were afraid that "One Big Union" would develop and the power structure would be put into the hands of the majority. In Vancouver this would result in what is now called "Bloody Sunday" on June 19th 1938. The government used massive force with tear gas and riot police to stop the protests of the thousands of homeless and poor. By today's standards this would be declared tyranny if we witnessed this happening in other countries.

Although there did exist a government, it was only interested in those citizens who were wealthy capitalists, not all the citizens. The realization that things were going to have to change was obvious. This is the point where things were done to manage the change in a way that kept capitalism in control.

Capitalism is not democracy - it is an economic system. Today we can see the results of this system as unfair by looking at the huge gap between the rich and the poor. To protect capitalism is not governance but protection of the unequal distribution of wealth and resources.

As with any system controlled by "the few" eventually they begin to protect their own needs because there is no mechanism in place that creates a goal for all of us to be eligible for "equal betterment." Even our elections only guarantee that capitalism stays in control. Citizens are considered somewhere else lower on the agenda for government.

Democracy, on the other hand, is based on letting the citizens decide what type of economic structure they want. Yet when the time for elections comes around not all of the ideas that are available are entitled to be included in the televised debates. It does not matter if they sound odd to us or even if we totally reject them for some personal reason, they are still valid in a democracy. By not allowing other ideologies to be presented to the citizens democracy is not at work, the protection of capitalism is.

Politics is the science of government, not the protection of an economic system. This is the manufacturing of "culture." The word culture comes from the Latin term "Cultus" which means (mind) training. This is a social construct to manage the way people think. It is effective because the average citizen believes that representative democracy and capitalism go hand in hand and for this reason have melded these two ideas into one and the same. Then we have learned to call this democracy, which simply is not true.

The ancient Romans used the same tactic to force the Britons into believing an ideology so that the few could have things the way they chose.

"In order that a population...might be habituated by comfort to peace and quiet...little by little the Britons were seduced into alluring vices; to the lounge, the bath, the well appointed dinner table. The simple natives gave the name of culture to this factor of their slavery..." (Pg 207 Tacitus)

Maybe the next step in social evolution begins with us, the citizenry, learning the difference between politics and economics. In this way we can decide if equal opportunity is a means to equal betterment.

Become informed...society needs you.

Works Cited: McCormack A. Ross. Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press 1977

Tacitus Cornelius. Dialogus, Agricola, Germanicus. Loeb Classic 1963



Utah Phillips: Bringing Down the Wall

by Brian Mason

We lost a gentle voice of wisdom on May 23, 2008 with the death of Utah Phillips, the much respected folk-singer, storyteller and anarchist. As a tribute to his life, the radio programme Democracy Now rebroadcast a 2004 interview between host Amy Goodman and Utah, which I was fortunate enough to hear. His two main points have stuck with me.

First, for Utah, there is far more effective political behaviour than turning out to vote once every four years for one of the mainstream political parties, all dedicated to upholding a destructive capitalist system based on greed and envy. That's not democracy. Instead, he preferred to use his body as his ballot, putting it to work every day to improve the lives of those around him. He regarded activism as the essence of politics.

His second point, more of a theoretical jumping-off position, was based on realisations he came to as a young adult, which served to guide his activism for the rest of his life. In his calm, measured voice Utah recounted how he had been lied to by everyone while growing up about what it means to be a man, a process of indoctrination that reached its zenith for him when he joined the army to fight in Korea. He had come to apprehend the insidious oppression of the patriarchal: hierarchical culture he was living in.

After his release from the army, Utah set out to "unlearn" these prevailing cultural norms, finding his freedom in a life of labour struggles and protest songs derived from his new and growing interest in feminism, which he came to regard as the most important movement in the world: "If we can really figure out what's going on between men and women, the other problems will take care of themselves – I'm sure of it."

More than anything, Utah realised that feminism is for everybody, that the oppression it seeks to end is the wellspring of all forms of oppression; the oppressions of racism, classism, imperialism, speciesism and capitalism.

all, not really. These steps are no more than like finding tiny ledges to rest on while trying to climb an unscalable wall of resistance. Real feminists want to bring down this wall; they want to create

new cultures, without hierarchy or dominance among men, women and the earth.

When feminist scholar bell hooks defined feminism as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression," she was as one with Utah Phillips. Nowhere in her definition do the words men or women appear. "All of us," explained hooks, "male and female, have been socialized from birth on to accept sexist thought and action." She claimed females "can be just as sexist as men" because sexism is built into our patriarchal: hierarchical culture of institutionalised sexism. In her analysis, as soon as some women (mostly middle class

and white) began to make individual progress within the patriarchal system, due largely to early feminist gains, they deserted the cause and bought back into the existing system, an exodus which, in due course, served to weaken the bonds of the feminist sisterhood itself. The movement became muted and a cliché, often derided by the mainstream patriarchal culture and media. Hijacked later by academia, feminism retreated even further away to settle in a cosseted place of endless, nuanced discussion. The revolution got postponed.

One of these legal scholars and feminists, Catherine Mackinnon, once argued that we must begin to understand from the perspective of gender not as difference, but as dominance. Difficult as it may be for us, a top predatory primate, to imagine our civilisations free of dominance, that is where we most need to go. The violence and exploitation that characterise our civilisation inevitably line a dead-end street. Sexism as domination crosses the genders precisely because it defines patriarchal: hierarchical society. The real story of life is rather more one of cooperation. Utah Phillips would want the wall to come down – and he would use his body to help this along.



David Rovics
reads the
Street Newz !!

www.davidrovics.com



David Rovics Remembers Utah Phillips

(excerpted - read more at davidrovics.com)

I was watching my baby daughter sleep in her carseat outside of the Sacramento airport when I noticed a missed call from Brendan Phillips. He's in a band called Fast Rattler with several friends of mine, two of who live in my new hometown of Portland, Oregon, one of whom needed a ride home from the Greyhound station. I called back, and soon thereafter heard the news from Brendan that his father had died the night before in his sleep, when his heart stopped beating.

I wouldn't want to elevate anybody to inappropriately high heights, but for me, Utah Phillips was a legend.

I first became familiar with the Utah Phillips phenomenon in the late 80s, when I was in my early twenties, working part-time as a prep cook at Morningtown in Seattle. I had recently read Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, and had been particularly enthralled by the early 20th Century section, the stories of the Industrial Workers of the World. So it was with great interest that I first discovered a greasy cassette there in the kitchen by the stereo, *Utah Phillips Sings the Songs and Tells the Stories of the Industrial Workers of the World*.

As a young radical, I had heard lots about the 1960s. There were (and are) plenty of veterans of the struggles of the 60s alive and well today. But the wildly tumultuous era of the first two decades of the 20th century is now (and pretty well was then) a thing entirely of history, with no one living anymore to tell the stories. And while long after the 60s there will be millions of hours of audio and video recorded for posterity, of the massive turn-of-the-century movement of the industrial working class there will be virtually none.

To hear Utah tell the stories of the strikes and the free speech fights, recounting hilariously the day-to-day tribulations of life in the hobo jungles and logging camps, singing about the humanity of historical figures such as Big Bill Haywood, Joe Hill or Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, was to bring alive an era that at that point only seemed to exist on paper, not in the reality of the senses. But Utah didn't feel like someone who was just telling stories from a bygone era -- it was more like he was a bridge to that era.

Hearing these songs and stories brought to life by him, I became infected by the idea that if people just knew this history in all its beauty and grandeur, they would find the same hope for humanity and for the possibility for radical social change that I had just found through Utah.

Thus, I became a Wobbly singer, too. I began to stand on a street corner on University Way with a sign beside me that read, "Songs of the Seattle General Strike of 1919." I mostly sang songs I learned from listening to Utah's cassette, plus some other IWW songs I found in various obscure collections of folk music that I came across.

Whether he's recounting stories from his own experiences or those of others doesn't matter. There is no need to know ... He was undeniably a sort of musical-political-historical institution in his own day. He said he was a rumor in his own time. No question, one man's rumor is another man's legend, but who cares, it's just words anyway.



Today, feminism is portrayed (if it's portrayed at all) as all about making gains within the prevailing system. Gains such as affirmative action programmes and equal pay for work of equal value. Or increased funding for family violence prevention programmes, and the right to choose abortion over the right to life. Sometimes, even, it's about tagging a few well-chosen male celebrities or a lumberjack or two to speak out against abuse in relationships. But this is not it at

Submitted by Brian Mason, a writer and philosopher living in James Bay.

editor's note: You can listen to Democracy Now noon-1 pm, Monday through Friday, at CFUV 101.9 FM, at cfuv.uvic.ca, or download it in from democracynow.org.

Photos are from the Vancouver Folk Festival where Utah was an annual fixture. One year he joined our security team photo as an honorary member. He left many with fond memories.

Over a Barrel: Exiting from NAFTA's Proportionality Clause

The Parkland Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) say "Canada is prohibited from cutting oil and gas exports to the US ... even if we experience shortages."

EDMONTON -- Despite the fact that we are running out of natural gas, and that we import 49% of the oil we consume, NAFTA dictates Canada's government cannot reduce the percentage of oil and gas we now export to the United States even in times of domestic shortages.

A new report released today by the University of Alberta's Parkland Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) says the only solution to this and other potential scenarios is for Canada to pull out of NAFTA's "proportionality" clause.

Over a Barrel: Exiting from NAFTA's Proportionality Clause provides a brief history of the proportionality clause in NAFTA, and highlights Canada's energy insecurity resulting from diminished conventional oil and gas reserves, our need to import 49% of the oil we consume, and the fact that we export two thirds of our oil and 60% of our gas to the U.S. The authors examine three scenarios in which the U.S. could invoke NAFTA to limit the ability of Canadians to set our own energy policy.

"We looked at whether Canada could reduce exports for the sake of conservation or environmental policy, or whether we could prioritize our dwindling natural gas reserves for domestic value-added production, or even for household heating. We cannot. We cannot even guarantee eastern Canadians access to western crude," says John Dillon, economic justice researcher at KAIROS and co-author of the report.

"Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have put NAFTA back on the table with their musings about re-negotiating or ripping up the agreement," says co-author Gordon Laxer, a political economist at the University of Alberta. "The Canadian government must realize it is the only country in the world that has jeopardized the energy needs of its people in this way, and move quickly to exit the proportionality provisions of NAFTA."

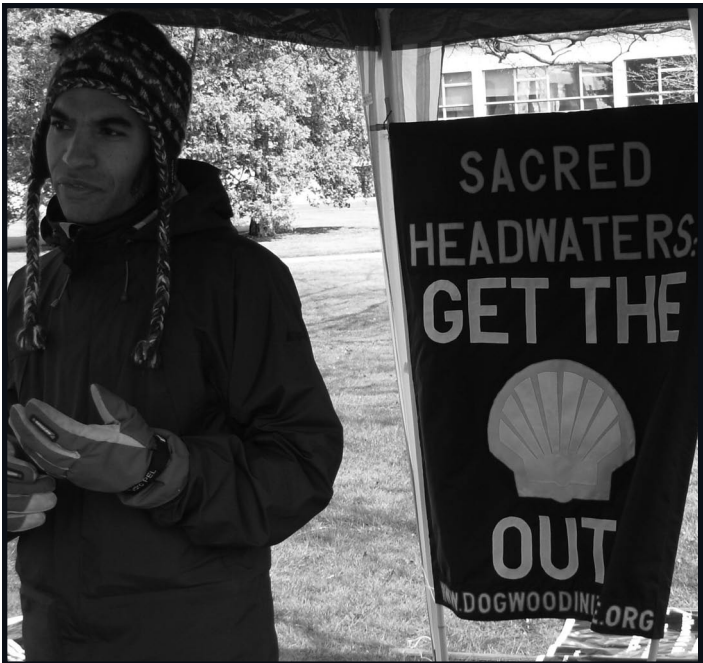
The research also draws attention to the fact that even Alberta only has 8 years of established natural gas reserves remaining -- indirect violation of its own legislation requiring a minimum 15 years of proven supply before any can be removed from the province. The report calls on the Alberta government to uphold its own policy.

The report concludes with a strong call to action by the federal government: when an energy supply crisis hits and Canadians are trying to cope under difficult conditions, the outcry for Canada to get out of the NAFTA clause will be deafening. Instead of waiting for such a crisis and such an outcry, the time to act is now.

This study is part of the ongoing work being done by Parkland, CCPA, KAIROS, and other organizations to develop a Canadian energy security strategy, which will meet the environmental, economic and energy needs of Canadians over the long term.

Over a Barrel: Exiting from NAFTA's Proportionality Clause is available free online from the Parkland Institute and CCPA - nl1824.policyalternatives.org.

photo: Charles Campbell represents the Dogwood Initiative (dogwoodinitiative.org) at Victoria's 2008 Earth Day.

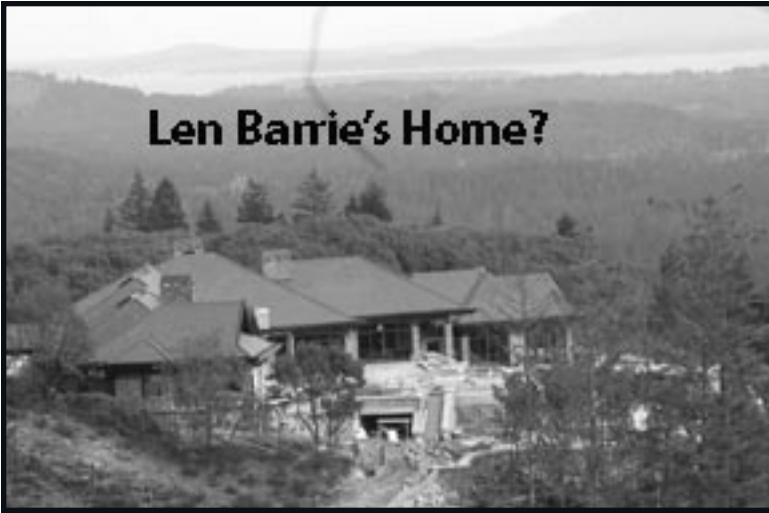


Death on the Mountain

by L'Ancienne

This is a powerful, hideous, and tragic story about ancient memories that do survive in the land, and in the rocks, and in the water.

The cave on Bear Mountain had a shimmering clearwater underground lake in it. This cave was not only beautiful beyond compare, but was too a cave of ancient legend. And the mountain has known many legends over the centuries.



Some archaeologists were wrong when they assumed that there was no cultural use for this type of cave, (a wet cave, as opposed to a dry cave where one might expect to find artifacts). They probably truly didn't know about the traditional use of the land in this area. Maybe few archaeologists do.

The developers of the Bear Mountain golf course and resort, Les Bjola and Len Barrie, practice a thing called "mass wasting." They clearcut. Every tree is removed. Most of them, hundreds of them, are piled and burned (including a giant arbutus forest). Arbutus are now sometimes "chipped." Even now, they are taking out thick stands of arbutus forest on the steep slopes just below the summit, and behind Gade Road, and along the proposed Echo Valley Road, and up along the new highway connector snaking its way across the mountain. Nothing is sacred in Langford.

The topsoil is scraped away, taking with it all the native plants - medicinal plants, camas, moss and ferns and rare wildflowers - then, the undulating natural bedrock formations are blasted and smashed, and the land is made flat. Nothing is left, but sterile jagged broken rock. The hills are blasted away and the deep ravines and valleys are filled in with rubble.

They Blasted the Cave on Bear Mountain: But They Mutilated it First.

First, archaeologists completely inexperienced regarding caves irresponsibly excavated in it near the entrance, making mud of the crystal clear pure water in the underground lake inside the cave. They crushed into mud the luxuriant growth of moss and ferns that enshrouded the entrance.

The developers crudely drained the water out. This surely killed the intricate and ancient life system that the cave supported. The pure water and the fact the cave had scarcely been disturbed in the last hundred years protected that rare and fragile ecosystem against all odds. The old people said it was their Holy Water drained away.

Then they stuffed the cave with massive piles of old tires, surely breaking delicate stalactites and rock formations in the cave. Then they jammed logging debris and tree stumps down in the entrance. They announced they were going to "remove the roof of the cave."

Some archaeologists said they needed to find an artifact to PROVE it was a cultural site in order to protect it under the Heritage Conservation Act. They said that sometimes it is necessary to destroy a site (or a cave) in order to properly "investigate" it !?! (Does anyone remember that Denise Blackwell works in the Archaeology Branch?)

They all knew perfectly well that it was a cultural site; First Nations people were screaming that to them, demanding it be protected and left alone. It was unlikely that there would be artifacts in the cave. It

was clearly not a habitation site, and any offerings left there would have been ephemeral in nature.

The failure of the Archaeology Branch in this was appalling. Archaeologists, biologists, and cave specialists around the world reacted in shock and disbelief.

Bear Mountain "allowed" elders to conduct a cultural ceremony on the ruined cave site as part of their "negotiations!"

"A healing ceremony is part of the agreement, which would transfer the spiritual significance away from the cave site," Stew Young (mayor of Langford) said.

The presence, let alone the size of the security force at the ceremony, and their gross interference was inappropriate and culturally offensive. Yet nothing could diminish it. And nothing will ever take away or destroy the spiritual significance of the cave site and all that surrounds it. And no one will ever forget it.

It was Remembrance Day weekend, 2006 that the cave was violated. Every year now, and increasingly as the years go by, First Nations people, on behalf of their ancestors and their descendants will REMEMBER and pay homage to the cave.

They blasted the cave, repeatedly. Then Bear Mountain filled the huge rock basin at the end of the sacred canyon nearby, filling it with dirt, gravel and rock rubble, causing mud flows to wash down over the sacred spring, and on down the stream that runs through the canyon below. The spring was choked with mud and was no longer flowing by December 5th. By Christmas, they were running their filth down the stream and all through the canyon.

The purest mountain spring water, bubbling out of the rocks - the water that we used to drink; the water we would climb the mountain for, so that we could drink it - is now all mud, filth and contamination. The stench was at times unbearable last year. It is all buried under some kind of foul sludge that dries to sickly clay in summer. The once lush streambed, bordered with moss and ferns, now looks like a blood-stained desert wasteland.



How does anyone save what's left? How do you restore this? Is it possible to save anything, ever, from people like this? Is it better to just let it all go; to let the ancient secrets die with the old ones, but die with dignity? Then, those who have seen it would be able to hold what they have seen in their hearts, knowing that at least that much could never be taken away from them.

But then, what in God's name is left for the 7th generation? Bare mountains without trees or the soil to support them? Scorched fields of sun-baked fractured rock? Putrid ponds of stagnant orange, undrinkable water where the purest mountain springs used to flow from the earth?

You don't have to wait seven generations for that; it is on Bear Mountain now. This is what they have done.

The cave was not the only thing violated. This mountain was an ancient ancestral stronghold. It will not be forgotten. It was a living mountain, with springs, waterfalls, flowers, and exquisite secret caverns.

The natural spring's - the source of all the water - ancient wisdom told the people the springs and pools of purest water are sacred. Beauty and wisdom so

Dear Couz,

Wow, Couz, let me tell you the latest since I last wrote to you. Recently I ran across three really interesting native women—Bernie Williams, Gladys Radek, and our very own Rose Henry, who sells our Street Newz newspapers.

These three women plan to walk as far as Ottawa in time for the opening of the fall Parliament. Others along the way will be joining them, some walking for short distances. Others will be walking the entire distance in a relay-type of arrangement.

The walk begins on June 19th from mile Zero to publicize the fact that so many women have just disappeared in recent years. From the Victoria area, the number of walkers will be fairly small; however, as the walk progresses there will be many people joining the walk.

Many of the missing women—native or white, street workers or non-street workers, well heeled or poor—simply remain missing. They have just faded into the woodwork. I guess you know that this on-going tragedy of women found dead or simply disappearing is taking place in northern B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as in the Vancouver/Victoria area. One of the women from Vancouver, Bernie, said that an average of three women per day are going missing.

I am in shock. Most of these women are Aboriginal. You know, if I didn’t know better, I would think that this is a start for a mystery novel, but it isn’t, Couz, it’s real.

It is a problem for me to figure out just how many women have disappeared. Bernie also points out to me that “violence knows no colour and no gender.” In order to get a better handle on just how bad the problem is, there have been questionnaires sent out to all native organizations to check who has gone missing from their particular area. The lists of women have then been cross-checked to make sure that no person has been counted twice. The tallies are not in yet, but the list looks absolutely huge, over 3000, says Gladys.

The organizers of this walk believe that the authorities connected with the investigations don’t care whether or not the cases get solved. They even wonder if the authorities don’t care if the women get killed in the first place. It’s a scary story, Couz, because it seems as if history is repeating itself: Are we going to have another Willie Pickton-type situation? Not great publicity for tourism in B.C., eh Couz....

Most of the native women who went missing were suffering from poverty. Many were drug-addicted, but certainly, not all of them were drug addicted. Up north, their constant poverty, often living on an isolated reserve far from anywhere with no bus service and no car has made them easy targets. What can you do when that is the case and you live 30 miles from work or from a supermarket? This fact, alone, has made the rural women sitting ducks for predators.

I might also add my opinion: Our natives, who are often so lovely to look at, along with their gentleness, has probably made them targets too, in my opinion. Like hey, Couz, who would target me or you? We’re too old, ugly and cantankerous, right?

All joking aside, Couz, these sick, controlling men like nothing better than someone who is young, beautiful and gentle.

I want to tell you about these three women, but first, let me mention that many other females, plus even

some guys, are involved in trying to make the walk successful. Now, on to Bernie, Gladys & Rose:

Bernie’s roots are Haida, Ahousaht, and the Sto: lo. At 51 years old, she tells me that she “lost her Mom and her sister to the downtown East Side,” as she puts it. As Bernie was just nine years old when that happened, it meant that she basically lost her own childhood too. Yet, Bernie managed to become a good enough artist that she actually got to apprentice under the famous Bill Reid. Imagine that, Couz! But you know what? She chose to become an activist, being paid nothing, to help end the victimization of all women, be they native or non-native. Bernie devotes her life to helping others from the downtown East side to change their life styles.

Bernie & Gladys are strong enough to recognize that they will NOT be well liked by either authority figures or the people that they are trying to help. Bernie puts it: “We are the most hated women on the downtown eastside.” Man, Couz, how many of us have felt that no one appreciates us and all we are doing is trying to help!

Gladys Radek is from the Gitsan WetUwit:en tribal group, up near Highway 16. Gladys has been worried about her niece, Tamara Chipman, who went missing in 2005. She fears the worst for Tamara.

Along with Bernie, Gladys does volunteer work in the downtown east side, visiting known drug sites, trying to help those in need and talking with the police.

Rose Henry is from the Sliammon Reserve, just north of Powell River. She has spent most of her life in a non-native foster home, part of the “60s Scoop,” says she. Unfortunately, once she left home the awful things began for her. In the end, she was almost totally finished off by a man who left her for dead in a dumpster.

But Rose is still here! In fact, she is very much alive, helping to tell people what’s going on with the homeless and the marginalized. She has become very powerful.

These three women ALL are powerful, Couz. It is Gladys and Bernie who consistently bug the police every single time a person goes missing from the downtown eastside. Their past efforts finally led to the police putting more effort into the investigation of the Willy Pickton farm.

In spite of all the bad stuff, Bernie, Gladys & Rose can laugh and joke and poke fun at themselves. They accept poverty for themselves—no, Couz, they are NOT being paid to do their incredibly difficult jobs. In the midst of everything, they still find time to nurture one of the young walkers, Nicole, encouraging her in her website skills and in her public speaking. I saw such encouragement lots among the native people when I was at the Youth Conference last month.

What do these women want from the Police? I give you the list, Couz:

- Investigate quickly when information comes up & upgrade to a criminal investigation, if needed, rather than leaving it merely as a “missing persons” case.
- Talk with the people who give them info. Let them know what is being done.



article & photos
by Jennifer
Hastie

• Don’t take offense when someone is upset, is questioning info, or is offering new info.

• Don’t see native women just as “problems.” They are no better or no worse than any other female.

Here’s some good news connected with this awful tragedy: There’s a private investigator, a retired policeman who has been trying to research these missing women. He is concentrating his efforts on the women who have gone missing on the “Highway of Tears.” That’s up north, Couz, the road which runs from Prince Rupert to Prince George. This retired guy does not get paid; also, he sure gets the criticism from the police for the work that he is doing on his own in this matter. However, the families of the missing women have a lot of respect for him. One day his efforts will be appreciated.

Another great thing is that the Anglican Diocese may be giving the

walkers a 3 day retreat after they arrive in Ottawa. It also sounds like the chiefs from the Assembly of 1st Nations, and Amnesty International are backing this very ambitious and courageous walk. I hope that they will be true to their word.

Last, Michaëlle Jean, our already famous Governor-General, has offered to walk with the group on their very last day when they will be entering Ottawa. No kidding! Whether or not she will be walking, I guess, depends on what the government lines up for her that day; however, SHE was the one who said that she wanted to walk with the group.

Let’s see what happens to this group during the summer months. In the meantime, Couz, have a good one!

Jennifer and her husband live in Victoria today. She is a healthy, active senior who enjoys writing volunteer articles for various publications.



Melbourne to host Homeless World Cup - December 1-7th, 2008

From the Homeless World Cup website (homelessworldcup.org) “There are one billion homeless people living in our world today. The Homeless World Cup exists to end this.

The Homeless World Cup is an annual, international football tournament, uniting teams of people who are homeless and excluded to take a once in a lifetime opportunity to represent their country and change their lives forever. It has triggered and supports grass roots football projects in over 60 nations working with over 25,000 homeless and excluded people throughout the year.

The impact is consistently significant year on year with 73% of players changing their lives for the better by coming off drugs and alcohol, moving into jobs, education, homes, training, reuniting with families and even going on to become players and coaches for pro or semi-pro football teams.”

Locally, Street Newz vendor Ted Hawryluk has begun attempts to organize a Victoria team with hopes to bring the Homeless World Cup to Whistler’s Olympic stage in 2010. Interested players, coaches, sponsors please contact Ted at 995-0122 or tedh@telus.net.

Requiem for Freedom

Unholy bush burned sacred and profane.
Nihilistic hawker of guns and glory for
Israel and Apocalypse, nightmare or dream.
Terror-broke bones, a towering failure, while
Ego and Eagle fed on the flesh.
Dissected entrails; searched symbol and sign.

Sins of the father; sins of the son.
Terror and State exacted revenge—
A dish served cold to masters of mayhem.
Terrible lies fell like manna from heaven as
Evangelical eyes sought prophecy and proof.
Shrill rage released in a deluge of hate.

Obscene homilies on freedom and peace
Fomented mania—a patriot's act.

A chorus of angels chanted laments as
Mothers fed babies to a solemn machine.
Each coffin wrapped like a present at Christmas.
Requiem for freedom waned on the wind.
Innocent blood seeped into sand as a
Cunning crusader swung his swift sword,
And democracy died on a pale afternoon.

George Simich

nobody called again
silence
on the other end of the
line
the persistent ringing
could it be your sister
sent recently home
from that place
supposed to save her
at least we all hoped
but likely knew better
blood alcohol rising
yet this only part
of the problem
hard rural work
uprooting earth planting
something new
cannot cure a lifetime
of disappointment
nor silence
the demons that run
deeper than blood
deeper than arms
up to their elbows in dirt

when nobody called again
i wondered
if it might be
that lonely solicitor
sunday night selling
at piece rate
an alarm system, a gym
membership
or seeking
donations to the firemen's
ball
small apartment bound
dialing sometimes only
to hear a hello

no one called
and i thought
of your sister, the solicitor
aching

*Lisa Helps
April 2008*



~Strangers To Our Land~

I've seen a day that brought to us,
From somewhere far away,
A people who don't seem to hear
The words we try to say.
They speak of, oh, so many things
We'd gain at your demise,
And look at everything you have
Through strange, uncaring eyes.
They've come to take you from us -
They've money in their hand -
But,
In spite of all their promises,
They're strangers to our land.

Your friends have known, with great relief,
The shelter you provide
When the blizzards
Sweep the snowdrifts
On the barren land so wide;
And seen the misty sunrise
Through the willows of your shore;
The moose that drank your waters,
And the little calf she bore -
That gazed in wonder
Across your stream
That first, primordial time,
And viewed this sweet, enchanted home,
This paradise sublime.

The people of the forest,
Finding food along your way,
Would bless you in their dances
At the ending of the day.
You gave these fields to harvest from -
This rich and verdant loam -
So we stayed here in this valley,
And pledged, in you, our home.
Should your waters, now,
Be forced to rise,
And cover all the signs
Of how we lived
and died here,
And how, for all of time,
We found in you our shelter,
We lived in your embrace;
And how you reached to all who came
Into this sacred place;
Then gone will be your ancient song,
That whispered in the ear
Of man and woman, deer and bear,
That found their refuge here.
We've learned to value what you give,
Your waters that run deep;
The life that you sustain here,
The rhythms that you keep.
They know not why you matter,
Why at your shore we stand;
The words we speak they cannot hear-
These strangers to our land.

© David Blaney, April 2008

But you would have to be an Idiot
to believe it.

My dear friend did you heard
Canada is best place on earth ?
But you would have to be an Idiot
to believe it.

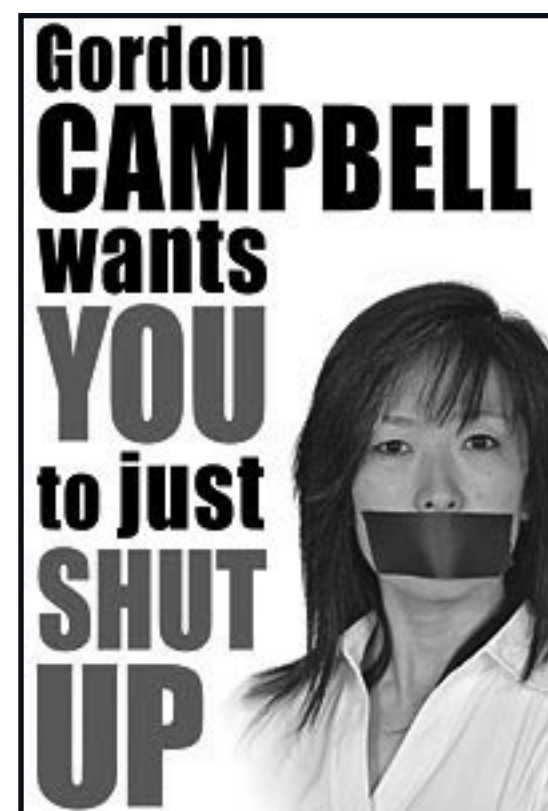
We have no homeless people
poverty - druggies or girls
you can call bitches.
We have just happy smiling
Canadians
who are enjoying their riches.

We have just happy smiling
Canadians
who are enjoying their riches.

My dear friend did you heard
Canada is best place on earth ?
But you would have to be an Idiot
to believe it.

We have no distrusted politicians
or Policemen who would lie.
We are all living in our heaven
on earth
and easy to know why ?

(c) miroslav vlcek 2008.



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